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Human Rights Pedagogies in the Classroom: Social Justice, US Indigenous Communities, and CSL Projects

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Abstract

Community service-learning (CSL) courses provide opportunities in which students engage in learning outside of the normative college classroom and are sites in which students can learn as a collective. In this article, we argue for a human rights pedagogy that considers how a critical engagement of CSL projects has fostered a bridging moment between academic and non-academic communities and offers new possibilities for building community. We analyze CSL projects with the American Indian Recruitment Programs - a grassroots, non-profit organization based in San Diego, California. We conclude our article with a human rights-based pedagogical model that is built upon the idea of interwoven liberation.

Keywords

Indigenous Communities, Human Rights, Pedagogy, Social Justice, Service-learning.

‘As we reflect upon what it means to ‘Indigenize the academy,’ we are beginning from the presumption that the academy is worth Indigenizing because something productive will happen as a consequence. Perhaps as teachers we can facilitate what bell hooks refers to as ‘education as the practice of freedom.’ Perhaps we might engage in an educational dynamic with students that is liberatory, not only for the oppressed but also for the oppressors. Perhaps as scholars we can conduct research that has a beneficial impact on humanity in general, as well as on our Indigenous peoples. Perhaps the scholarship we produce might be influential not only among our ivory tower peers, but also within the dominant society. Perhaps our activism and persistence within the academy might also redefine the institution from an agent of colonialism to a center of decolonization’ (Miheuah and Wilson 2004).

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The tumultuous 1960s led to some radical reconfigurations of the academy. For the first time, universities across the US began to offer courses in ethnic studies and women's studies, eventually leading to the formation of programs and departments. These victories were hard-fought, as students, faculty, and community members demanded inclusion in the curriculum, admission into the student body, and representation among faculty. In this human rights struggle over education, over-worked and under-valued faculty of color taught new courses, dealt with hostile administrators and faculty colleagues, and demanded that the academy begin outreach and retention of communities of color. Faculty committed to a liberatory educational model taught courses that analyzed racial and gender inequalities in the US, exposed injustices in university procedures related to outreach and admission, and helped create a long overdue space for communities of color within academic institutions.

Trained as sociologists together at the University of California, Santa Barbara, we come together to think about important pedagogical dilemmas in our roles as professors. We believe that we find ourselves in a historical moment in which radical and transgressive educational practices are under increasing assault, with unprecedented budget cuts, continual increases in tuition and student fees, and proposed regressive legislation that seek to undo the legacy of progress that our predecessors gained.¹ We come to this collaborative project as feminist scholar-activists of color² deeply committed to principles of egalitarianism, justice, and human rights. Michelle Jacob is an associate professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of San Diego (USD), a private Catholic institution, and Sylvanna Falcón is an assistant professor in the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), a public institution.³ Our different, yet intertwined, social locations, provide a prime opportunity in which to explore vexing questions about racial justice, social justice, and human rights in the classroom. Since upholding human rights crosses public/private divides, we believe our collaboration can inform a new generation of teachers and scholars in both public and private institutional settings.

The purpose of our paper is to argue for a human rights pedagogy that aims to dismantle race, gender, and class oppression through a critical engagement of CSL projects. In this article, we argue

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the integration of human rights in the classroom offers new possibilities for building community, and that the increasingly popular CSL model has created a bridging moment between academic and non-academic communities as university students are required to go 'outside' of the institution for their learning. We find these two elements - utilizing a human rights approach to building community in the classroom and students' involvement in CSL projects - as an ideal mix to explore the significance of linking a human rights pedagogy and sociology. CSL projects require students, in part, to confront the legacies and current manifestations of human rights abuses at the local level. We also offer an analysis of the complexities of using university-course-based service-learning projects to address human rights abuses, especially for indigenous peoples.

We begin our discussion about collaborating with indigenous peoples in an academic setting by addressing the relationship of critical pedagogy and race as well as the cultural and political aspects of indigeneity. In considering how a human rights approach in the classroom can be used to build a justice-seeking community, we analyze CSL projects taking place in Native communities, using the experiences of Professor Jacob in San Diego as a point of departure. We conclude by proposing a new pedagogical model that merges Native ideologies and human rights, while proposing steps for effective implementation of the model.

Critical Pedagogy and US Communities of Color

With the first sociology department established in 1892 at the University of Chicago⁴, sociology, like other disciplines within the academy, reflected the race, gender, and class inequalities prevalent in US society. Even the sociological canon, largely reserved for white European men - Marx, Freud, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel⁵ - is a reminder of the discipline's foundational inequalities of race, gender, and class. However, exclusion from the formal sociological canon did not mean that people of color were not formulating their own radical social critiques. For example, indigenous peoples used oral histories to analyze the genocidal policies and practices of colonists and their descendants and thus, carried out their own 'informal' sociological critiques.⁶

When a critical mass of people of color entered and complet-

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ed graduate programs in the 1960s and 1970s and subsequently joined the ranks of university and college faculty across the country, teaching about subject matters of race/ethnicity/gender was difficult because early sociological studies perpetuated racist and sexist myths and falsehoods. In addition, teaching within an institution built and designed to empower and privilege the alleged 'objectivity' of white, Western, male, and heterosexual ways of knowing created hurdles in crafting a critical pedagogy that centers race (Leonardo 2005) from the perspective of communities of color. It was not until the 1980s that sociological monographs that focused on American Indians, from an indigenous perspective, began to gain attention in the discipline (See Thornton and Grasmick 1980; Thornton, Sandefur, and Grasmick 1982; Snipp 1988).

Paolo Freire's seminal works on pedagogy remain illustrative for exploring the relationship between critical pedagogy and US racial/ethnic communities. Calling for a 'radical transformation of the educational system invented by the colonizers,' Freire reminds us that *conscientização*, or consciousness, while necessary, is also a threat (Arrujo, Freire and Macedo 1998: 70). But once critical consciousness is achieved through an 'active educational model,' the politicization process occurs where students find themselves at a crossroads in making a 'conscious option' about how to live their lives (Arrujo, Freire and Macedo 1998: 92). Freire's work regarding the power of education for consciousness-raising is about a resistance to 'dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it' (Arrujo, Freire and Macedo 1998: 45).

In order to engender *conscientização*, a level of disruption must occur in terms of epistemologies. As Adriana Hernandez asks, 'How [do we] facilitate the process of epistemological rupturing within the classroom' (Hernandez 1997: 87)? The epistemological rupturing is required for de-centering the values placed on academic scholarship over organic community-based knowledge. Residing betwixt and between the academy and our social/cultural/political communities, our role as teachers of color is as interventionists and bridges. As Hernandez states, 'The work of the teacher comes into play as an intervention that has to bridge those knowledges, in the sense of working on the continuities and ruptures existing among them,

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articulating their dynamic/tension within the organization of school knowledge' (Hernandez 1997: 87).

The introduction of Critical Race Theory (CRT) played a key role in the development of a critical pedagogy. For Dolores Delgado Bernal and Octavio Villalpando, two themes from CRT theory are useful to 'analyze how an apartheid of knowledge that marginalizes, discredits, and devalues the scholarship, epistemologies, and other cultural resources of faculty of color is embedded in higher education' (Delgado Bernal and Villalpando 2005: 185). The first theme is about questioning the 'dominant claims of objectivity, meritocracy, and individuality in United States society' and the second theme is about 'affirm[ing] the importance of drawing from the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin' (Delgado Bernal and Villalpando 2005: 185-186). Delgado Bernal and Villalpando ultimately argue that higher education remains invested and embedded in believing objectivity is attainable and that the local knowledge from communities of color remains suspect. In part, the suspicion stems from a discomfort of the access to 'cultural resources' by people of color, which are beyond the reach of white heterosexual males in particular.

As Zeus Leonardo maintains, 'the question of race has played a secondary role in the development of critical pedagogy,' he urges 'a deeper engagement' with race and critical pedagogy in that 'the concept of race [be] the point of departure for critique, not the end of it' (Leonardo 2005: xi). For us, Leonardo's challenge remains central as we integrate the critical knowledge of US indigenous communities about the social world's increasing inequalities and human rights injustices into our course curriculum.

Similar to other racialized groups, indigenous peoples also have unique cultural and political aspects of identity rooted in a colonial legacy. Indigenous communities have engaged in decolonizing efforts that preserve and revitalize their cultural ways. Efforts to reclaim Native cultural practices range from returning to traditional food practices, revitalizing indigenous languages, and ultimately building indigenous communities, which center traditional teachings regarding the importance of interconnectedness across the generations (LaDuke and Alexander n.d.; Mihesuah 2005; Jacob 2010). Since colonialism set out to destroy indigenous peoples and livelihoods, activi-

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ties led by indigenous peoples - including the service-learning project we describe below - are particularly worthy of support.

As global indigenous-led movements appeal to entities like the United Nations in asserting their national sovereignty and self-determination, politics has as much to do with indigeneity as with culture and race. With sovereignty being 'an integral part of indigenous peoples' daily existence,' indigenous peoples, such as the late Ingrid Washinawatok, define sovereignty as 'the fabric of Native society' and as 'that wafting thread securing the components of society' which involves spirituality and responsibility (Washinawatokm 2011). Based on this perspective, CSL projects with indigenous peoples can symbolize our inter-woven liberation because the 'fabric' of our pedagogical model (discussed below) includes reciprocity, responsibility, and justice; furthermore, we frame CSL projects as being *mutually* beneficial, which will require professors to share decision-making power with community members.

Teaching about people of color in more humane and dignified ways is a primary component to the development of a critical, and liberatory, pedagogy. Critical pedagogy that incorporates a *conscientização* regarding racial/ethnic/gender/class inequalities suggests that our role and presence in the US academy as faculty of color remains invaluable. Stemming from the fact that many faculty of color emerge from vilified and marginalized communities, the evolution of a critical pedagogy of race, culture, and politics means that we must find ways to ethically link our work in the classroom to our work in communities outside of the ivory tower.

Indigenous Homeland and Academic Institutions

All higher education institutions in the US are built on Native homelands. Yet, even a simple browse through university webpages, curricula, and mission statements reveals that academic institutions most often ignore this historical, social, and political fact. Usually, the discussion of a university's history begins with the year that the institution was founded. For instance, in the case of the University of San Diego, 60 years ago marks the beginning of its official institutional history and for the University of California, Santa Cruz, the official institutional history begins in 1965. However, from an indigenous perspective, those views of history are already lacking a critical aware-

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ness of the ways in which the academy ignores the Native peoples' land upon which the universities stand today, completely rendering the histories of indigenous peoples invisible. In this light, we encourage readers to critically examine their own institutional locations and relations to indigenous homelands.

For indigenous peoples, respectful relationships are foundational to a positive educational experience. Therefore, as indigenous peoples who may travel to other territories to attend school or work at a university, we acknowledge that we are guests on other tribes' traditional homelands. In the case of the University of San Diego, the school is built on traditional Kumeyaay homeland. As an indigenous person, I (Jacob) dishonor myself, my ancestors, and my community (as well as the local Kumeyaay community) if I do not honor that fact. I acknowledge that USD is built upon the homeland of a strong people who survived human rights atrocities, including multiple colonial encounters, enslavement by the Catholic mission system, and the genocidal policies of the US, which sought to annihilate the Kumeyaay peoples through war, disease, removal, the reservation system, and boarding schools. In fact, it is my responsibility as an indigenous person to know this indigenous history. This indigenous perspective of education - of being responsible for learning the history of the land, of respecting the local indigenous peoples - is essential to live, learn, and work in a respectful way on the indigenous homeland upon which we find ourselves.

In our role as educators, we feel deeply committed to bringing this type of respect and responsibility to our students. Hence, it does not make sense to create a curriculum or practice a pedagogy that ignores local and historical realities and that denies students the opportunity to learn to relate to the land 'in a good way.'⁷ Yet, in a Western educational system's curriculum, respectful and responsible engagement with indigenous peoples, beyond textbooks, is not encouraged or supported. Our challenge as educators is to think creatively about how to do our work within academia in a way that includes indigenous peoples in our teaching and centers Native epistemologies and responsibility about the people and land upon which we stand. It is a challenge that seeks to dismantle the oppression that underlies the legacy of human rights abuses that indigenous peoples face.

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Human Rights Pedagogy in the Sociological Classroom and for Building Community

A human rights framework facilitates a practice of teaching that enables transgressions in an institutional environment fraught with new challenges. CSL projects are one example of bringing human rights into the classroom. But first, how do we define and understand human rights? The legal manifestations of human rights are typically in the foreground of any discussion about human rights; but what do these legal manifestations have to do with the sociological classroom, especially if we are not teaching a human rights law course? If we limit human rights to a legal framework, then in essence, we are not approaching the issue of human rights as holistically as we should be (Collins, Falcón, Lodhia, Talcott 2010a). We need to ask how are human rights understood organically, culturally, and socially? In other words, how are human rights conceptualized at the community level, in particular, from an indigenous perspective? If we begin from this vantage point – how is human rights understood at the local (non-academic) level – then we have at least begun to rupture the divide of academic knows best, community members know least (or in paternalistic terms, ‘do not know better’); in short, we have begun the process of building community.

It is precisely because respecting human rights is about justice that human rights can play a pivotal role in building a learning community that transcends academic borders. If we consider the categories of academic and non-academic dialectically, it becomes apparent that, by taking a human rights approach to our pedagogy, we understand, in an intrinsic sense, that our mutual liberation – the professor of color, the working-class student, the Native elder for example - is interwoven. Thus, this web of interconnection requires that we appreciate all forms of knowledge in our pursuit of liberation, not just the knowledge we gain from scholarly texts. Moreover, human rights are, by definition, indivisible. It follows that upholding civil rights requires a simultaneous upholding and respect for social and economic rights, for instance. Different types of human rights are not mutually exclusive.

Human rights pedagogy requires recognition that students enter the classroom from different places, different experiences, and find themselves situated differently along a continuum of privilege. At

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the same time, students have a shared interest in receiving a quality education. A quality education, when we centralize human rights in our pedagogy, does not reinforce that knowledge is unidirectional - from professor to student - but rather, multi-directional.⁸ Moreover, a quality education requires that we, as educators, are not short-sighted in our knowledge about the problematic ways in which academia relates to communities of color *outside* of academia. In treating communities of color as 'research sites' or 'research subjects' rather than as an extension of our intellectual communities, borders emerge between members of academia who think they know what they are doing and non-academic people of color who may feel like they are being used.

Human rights pedagogy means that we are all responsible for injustice and we all have a role to combat it daily - in both small and substantial ways. The creation of a human rights pedagogy, based on interwoven liberation, requires a transformation of the classroom space beyond the four walls in a room to analyze and think about injustice in all its forms. An important way in which human rights can be taught to students is through CSL projects. CSL projects offer opportunities to actively situate human rights, while affirming that epistemologies and knowledges are not simply learned by reading scholarly books.

A Brief History of CSL Projects

According to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse 2008) service-learning and civic engagement have been a central part of the US academy since the 19th century. Service projects have long been an activity in which formal campus organizations, with examples such as fraternities, sororities, or faith-based groups, doing 'charity work' as part of their mission. However, it was not until the 1960s that service-learning began to be more formally articulated as an educational practice that sought to critique and dismantle persistent race, class, and gender inequalities in US society.

Stemming from the momentum of the civil rights movement, the foundation of the Peace Corps in 1961, and the creation of the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program in 1965, activists organized the first service-learning conference in Atlanta in 1969. This

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conference formally articulated and defined service-learning, which included the recommendation that, 'Students, public and private agency officials, and college and university faculty should all participate in the planning and running of service-learning programs' (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse 2008). Today, estimates indicate one-third of all college and university students are participants in service-related projects as a result of campus service-learning and civic engagement initiatives (Campus Compact 2009). Many of these projects are designed to increase students' cultural competence, which commonly overlaps with university mission statements that espouse the importance of diversity.

The Potential of Service-Learning as a Human Rights Educational Tool

Service-learning courses are opportunities in which students engage in learning outside of the normative college classroom and are sites in which students can resist the limitations of class time that usually constrains their opportunities to learn as a collective. For the purposes of this article, we will use the University of San Diego as a case study for CSL projects. We draw from examples from the service-learning courses⁹ taught by Professor Jacob over the past five years in partnership with the American Indian Recruitment (AIR) Programs (www.airprograms.org), a local, grassroots, and non-profit organization. USD students serve as tutors and mentors in an afterschool program that promotes educational success among American Indian high school students, who attend the program from local reservations and the larger San Diego-urban area. As a result, university students not only read about the educational inequalities facing Native communities, as part of their required coursework, but they also have a direct opportunity to help support a Native-led effort that seeks to dismantle the educational disadvantages facing Native youth. Through this service-learning project, students are also educating themselves first-hand about injustice and learning ways to disrupt patterns of inequality.

USD students possess forms of cultural capital that are commonly not accessible within Native students' homes or communities, such as: taking the SAT's, choosing college preparation courses in high school, completing college admissions applications, filling out the

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FAFSA form, finding and applying for scholarships. During the AIR Program sessions, college students teach workshops and conduct small group sessions on these academic success topics (study tips, how to write an essay, using library databases, approaching a teacher/ counselor to talk about college aspirations), and provide overt and covert messages that help Native youth realize they can be 'college material.'

During the research sessions at AIR, USD students assist high school students in finding critical information about a topic that is relevant to contemporary human rights struggles within Native communities (e.g. the diabetes epidemic, repatriation of human remains, toxic waste on Native lands, access to health care). These important topics are nearly always a neglected subject matter within the K-12 system that the high school students attend.

In this process of interaction between college and high school students as part of their service-learning projects, they ultimately build a relationship that affirms each other's importance; as a result, tremendous intellectual and political growth occurs over the course of the term with USD students who are predominately non-Native students. These students begin to understand human rights issues and abuses from an oppositional Native perspective, as they hear narratives that are rooted in traditional tribal teachings, most often shared by tribal elders who visit the program as formal guest speakers, or less formally, simply because the Native elders provide transportation for the high school students and therefore, attend the program. These elders are often related to Native youth in the AIR Program.

Service-learning projects also provide an important opportunity for Native peoples to reclaim a traditional educational practice - intergenerational teaching and learning - and to resist the status quo model of education that persists in academia. As Devon Mihesuah states:

'We have read much about the importance of retaining cultural knowledge. We also know that mainstream education does not promote that goal. Many universities want window dressing, that is, Native faculty and staff on display, but they do not want Native ideologies included into the curriculum' (2003: 462)

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The integration of Native ideologies within a mainstream academic institution is critical for affirming the importance of elders and Native community members as knowledge keepers. Moreover, this pedagogical practice teaches the Native youth that they are capable culture bearers - as with the sharing of elders' testimonies comes the responsibility of listeners to keep the lessons alive.

It can be difficult to assess the ways in which participation in the AIR service-learning project impacts college students' learning. Standard rubrics fail to include meaningful measures or domains that value and respect indigenous people's knowledge systems and values. Yet, professors can begin to assess the impact of CSL projects by incorporating student reflection assignments into the curriculum. Here we will provide excerpts from reflections that USD students wrote in the Spring 2010 semester, which are representative of the range of overall student assessments.¹⁰ The identities of the students are concealed to ensure their privacy.

Students completed reflection papers over the course of the semester. Professor Jacob asked students to critically assess their participation in AIR and occasionally asked for specific connections to an assigned reading.

Noelani, a sophomore student of Native Hawaiian ancestry, comments on the ways that participating in the CSL project fosters intercultural understanding among USD students from different backgrounds. She refers to 'exchanges and eye-opening experiences that occur between mentors' in her paper, correctly noting that 'AIR mentors are not all Native.' The Native-focused CSL project provides an opportunity for her to find some common ground and understanding with non-Native classmates. She writes, "The commonality is that all AIR mentors are participating to experience something new, to help younger generations, to bring change to higher education, and/or to understand another culture."

In her paper, Noelani reflects on her experiences with racism on the predominantly white USD campus, and credits AIR with helping her to overcome some of her hostility towards white students, as AIR helped her witness white classmates in a different light. She writes:

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'I was able to work on my openness with others, and to see people past their skin color. I got to put that saying to the test: 'an identity based on politics, not politics based on identity.' With the resentment and frustration I gained as a USD freshman, I created a vantage point of 'us,' [people of color] against whites and those 'white-washed.' The readings of this class, AIR, and the few speakers, has really helped me follow through with my intentions to find balance. Programs like AIR create coalitions and initiates bridges between people.'

The change in Noelani are evident to herself ('I grew as a person because of the small shared space with so many different people with one common neutral goal of the AIR program'), and is an example of how transformative the experiences can be for students, changing their own views on life. Noelani writes, 'I have been searching for a new outlook containing patience and understanding of others who may not exactly share my views. AIR has granted me an open-window to a place that I will reach one day.'

Alicia, a biracial student (self-identified as Mexican-American/white) in her senior year, observes how participating in AIR helps high school and college students, and even the mentors themselves, learn valuable leadership skills and 'embody' leadership. Her reflection comes during a difficult time in the semester when schools had conflicting spring breaks scheduled, so not all students were consistently attending; yet the AIR curriculum demands that students plan their final presentation projects. Such ambiguous and challenging conditions call for strong leadership, a point that Alicia realizes.

Alicia writes about one of the high school students who had taken it upon himself to work on the group presentation project ideas over the weekend. She states, 'After we talked about financial aid today, Justin [an AIR Native high school student] pulled out a typed up piece of paper that he had composed.' Alicia discusses how the group was hesitant to move forward, as other students lacked initiative. Alicia mentions how Justin 'was hesitant in finalizing the presentation, because half of the group didn't show up. Dwight [the AIR Executive Director] came over and gave him a pep talk about [how]

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being an effective leader involves incorporating other people, so they can review and improve your work. He said that this only helps you grow as a person and as a leader.'

The interaction between Dwight and Justin encourages Alicia to gain confidence in reaching out to help lead the group. She works with Justin to review what he has written:

'When Dwight left I looked his paper over. He had [outlined the presentation] and chosen 4 healthy activities Native American communities participate in: Dance, Acorn Gathering, Lacrosse, and Running. Under them he listed the benefits and importance of the activity and a spiritual aspect. I was really impressed that he had taken the time to do this. I came to find out later that he sometimes doesn't do his regular school work, but he does things for AIR.'

For Alicia, the CSL project teaches leadership. She sees a Native high school student as a strong leader who cares about his contribution in the AIR program and she learns to nurture this budding leadership, by offering to review his work and to help encourage his further growth. Alicia, who normally is very shy, takes initiative in the group, by helping the high school students make a decision on the format of their final presentation. She writes:

'We weren't getting anywhere so I got my pad and paper out thinking this would spur us on, and show them I was interested. I made it fun, but I told them we had to make a decision right now, saying 'okay, go!' Everyone laughed and we were on our way. Had I not stepped up, maybe someone else would have, but I think this was one way to show them they can take control, like Justin did, as well as I, and make things happen. Great day at AIR.'

Reflection papers provide students with a space in which to articulate the unique ways in which CSL participation may influence their own lives. Such assignments can be meaningful for non-Native students, such as Alicia, who is learning to gain confidence in herself as a leader.

Additionally, the reflection papers can provide space for

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Native students to reflect on their own identities and the ways in which a Native-centered CSL project may influence their lives. Student papers reveal that the impact of the AIR CSL project is deeply meaningful for American Indian students from USD when they participate, in part because of their intimate knowledge of the inaccessibility of higher education for most indigenous peoples. Similar to other Native students on US college campuses, Violet, an American Indian student in her junior year, addresses the alienation she feels in predominantly white institutions in her reflection paper. She draws from the encouragement of her home reservation community and her family, who want her to become the first in her family to obtain a college degree, as a way to cope with the alienation. She writes:

‘...I take pride in the AIR program because I want to help and encourage students to think about going to college and being successful like my family did for me. There are probably many stories similar to mine and a reason to why many Natives do not even think about college because of generational trauma impacting the future generations.’

Violet’s participation as an AIR mentor helps her to understand practical ways that educational inequalities can be subverted. She realizes numerous social and historical factors contribute to the poor educational attainment rates of indigenous peoples, but also that Native peoples can work together to make a difference in young people’s lives. Through her weekly work tutoring and mentoring Native high school students, she sees herself as taking part in vital social justice work.

These excerpts from students’ reflection papers describe the transformative impact of CSL project participation for undergraduate students. However, a tremendous amount of advanced planning and community building must occur in order to facilitate student learning to ensure community members benefit as well. As McNally notes with regards to coordinating service-learning projects within indigenous communities, ‘Even with all that added work and risk, I can still say the benefits of service-learning continue to exceed expectations’ (McNally 2004: 611). We believe the next step for educators is

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to articulate models of educational practice upon which assessment tools can later be developed. In the next section, we propose a pedagogical model that grapples with the required preparation to have successful CSL projects with indigenous communities.

Interwoven Liberation: Our Pedagogical Model

The origins of human rights have a similar genealogy as the sociological canon we discussed previously in that human rights has largely been considered Eurocentric and imperialist. However this one-dimensional view of human rights does not consider the ways in which people have taken on the labor of re-conceptualizing human rights to embody new analytics in which to understand inequality and injustice. According to Elizabeth Philipose:

‘[T]hrough and through, international legal systems are imperial and racialized and supremacist. To not take on the task of decolonizing these systems that govern and regulate international behavior is to reproduce . . . the violence. . . against those whom we aim to protect. It is not a question of working within the parameters of the existing systems, but of revolutionizing those systems through our advocacy and activism, and creating analytics that refuse to be complicit in recolonizing the world.’ (2008: 114)

As we consider ways to indigenize the academy, we agree with scholars who contend, ‘only when the protection of human rights becomes a project in which many voices participate will human rights cease to be *an imposition of Western values*’ (Speed and Collier 2000: 882). Similarly, when ‘many voices’ comprise academia, the institution itself becomes Indigenized in that it no longer exclusively represents or embodies dominant society’s views (See Roskos 2004, Collins et al, 2010a). Thus, indigenizing the academy is a *process* in which Western academic institutions are transformed into sites that respect and include Native peoples and cultures; an educational institution that becomes a site of learning, growing, and collaboration between Native and non-Native peoples.

Our human rights pedagogical model involves four key principles for creating and sustaining successful partnerships with US

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indigenous peoples. We have chosen to express our model using the imagery of a basket, as baskets are important to many indigenous peoples, including California Indians, and Kumeyaay peoples in particular. Drawing from the teachings of Martha Rodriguez at Kumeyaay Community College, we use the imagery of a Kumeyaay basket start, as seen in Figure 1, to symbolize our interwoven liberation when we work together. The basket provides a useful image that reminds us our collective liberation is interdependent.

Figure 1. Kumeyaay basket start



Weaving and photo by Michelle M. Jacob

The juncas, which are the strands that circle around the pine needle bundles, represent human rights principles that hold our model together and symbolize the interwoven nature of our labor as educators. The pine needles symbolize the range of our everyday educational practices, including: outreach to Native community partners, selection of course readings from an indigenous perspective, making space and modeling respect for elders' teachings and Native ideologies. Ultimately, the basket represents intentional actions that share power with community partners, which includes active listening to traditional cultural teachings.

First, *reciprocity and sincerity are non-negotiable values for successful CSL projects with Native communities*. In studying the factors that create a successful educational partnership among American Indians within the college environment, Shotton and colleagues (2007) identify that reciprocity and sincerity are essential. American Indians need to feel

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that the educational experience ‘gives back’ to their tribal community (reciprocity), and that people involved in the partnership are motivated by a desire to help (sincerity), rather than being motivated by self-interest. Although Shotton and colleagues study a peer-mentoring program within the college environment, among college students and personnel, their findings are helpful for our analysis, as we examine the ways in which sociology and ethnic studies classrooms can be radical spaces for education that benefit both students and local indigenous communities.

Second, *achieving intercultural competence requires that we prioritize understanding the local context*. By starting with the concept of race as the point of departure for critical pedagogy as Leonardo contends, then matters of intercultural competence should start with the local indigenous peoples themselves because mainstream society grossly misunderstands (and devalues) Native realities and epistemologies. Intercultural competence is generally recognized as an important skill that should be learned and applied within education and the workforce, as such skills serve as an important form of cultural capital in an increasing diverse and globalized society (Hoobler 2005; Ngai 2006).

Some scholarship has examined the ways in which indigenous cultures and educational models may help foster students’ intercultural competence. For example, Ngai (2006) argues for incorporating indigenous education into the curriculum in order to provide students with an example of learning cultural competence at the local level, which can serve as an important foundation within students’ educational experience. Put simply, how can students learn to have global cultural competence if they ignore the local, indigenous context? Yet, too often educators overlook the possibilities of starting local, with the tribal peoples and their homelands on which US educational institutions sit today. Meaningful engagement with local indigenous peoples and cultures can yield a fruitful educational exchange that benefits both the local indigenous peoples and the students themselves. In this article, we have provided examples of how educators can begin to pay attention to the local indigenous context.

As professors, we must teach the necessary lessons about Native communities in which our institutions have been built. First, teaching students about the genocide and human rights abuses committed against indigenous peoples is a complex task given the

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limitation of our time with students during the quarter or semester. However, adequate planning and solid partnerships with indigenous community members will aid our efforts. If we want to sustain a political commitment to human rights education, the sociological classroom can become a space for 'mak[ing] education the practice of freedom' (hooks 1994) when we organically, respectfully, and responsibly incorporate community members into our curriculum units.

Third, *CSL projects must be approached as a matter of justice and not as a colonial relic of paternalism*. If our goal as teachers is to dismantle race, gender, and class oppressions, then a radical educational model must be developed that refuses to frame service-learning projects in paternalistic terms (i.e., students needing to help the poor and un-fortunate). Instead, service-learning projects should be framed in terms of justice (i.e., students have a responsibility to combat inequality). Service projects are easily co-opted into paternalistic busy work that can quickly slide into language that reinforces, rather than undermines, race, gender, and class oppressions. Students may walk away from service projects by patting themselves on the backs for helping the 'pitiful' poor people, the uneducated, the 'backwards heathens.' We must challenge our students who think along these lines.

We must also be cognizant that we work within Western institutions that are structured to privilege a paternalistic approach. Structural inequalities, as evidenced in the lack of Native students, faculty, staff, community collaborations as well as limited or no resources to support changing these challenging conditions, increases our responsibility in facilitating CSL projects. These structural barriers are ripe for maintaining an environment where paternalism prevails; thus, we must actively work to counter it by repeatedly framing CSL projects as a matter of human rights and justice.

Only by engaging in strong partnerships are educators likely to envision a service-learning project that transgresses beyond paternalism. This point is especially crucial when conducting work with local indigenous peoples. Often, Native peoples are invisible within an educational institution and in the broader community. Thus, students (and faculty) may not have experience working with, or even seeing, Native peoples. These conditions may mean that students and

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university personnel bring loaded stereotypes to the service-learning project.¹¹ One way that educators can undermine the power of stereotypes is to prepare students with a set of critical readings that are written from an indigenous perspective and invite Native elders to speak with students. Lecture, class discussions, and guest speakers can undermine powerful stereotypes.

In conjunction with strong community partnerships, lectures and class discussions must also make certain that students understand they have a responsibility and accountability in CSL projects. In other words, the 'privileged lives' of many of our students come at the expense of the communities they encounter in CSL projects. We must *directly* ask students what they are willing to change so that we do not continue witnessing such disparities. As filmmaker Peter Bratt states:

'If not consciously, at least subconsciously, we all know that something needs to shift if we're going to survive. It is really easy to talk about change as a social platform, but it is a whole other matter to talk about change, real and lasting change, on the personal and individual level. Sometimes that's a painful process, but the pain is necessary for growth. In order to confront the pain and transmute it into 'medicine', you need both faith and love. With those two on your side, nothing is impossible.' (See Collins et al 2010b: 496)

Enduring social change, as Bratt contends, will only occur if we are willing to change the way we lead our lives, which can be painful to consider. Combating inequalities effectively does not simply mean ensuring that opportunities are opened for those who lack access to education, for example. It also entails turning the critical lens on ourselves and identifying ways in which we can modify our own privileged ways of being.

Additionally, educators can work to establish service-learning partnerships that emphasize the needs of indigenous communities, and share power in decision-making for the project. These are simple examples, but they can be complicated for faculty who are used to making all their own decisions about course material. We recommend that faculty openly acknowledge when they themselves are learning to articulate and follow a justice-based model, and frequently remind

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students that building a radical, service-learning based curriculum is an active process, not a tidy package that can be downloaded from the Internet or purchased from the bookstore.

Fourth, *we must develop clear assessment rubrics in which we can determine what students gained from the experience, their shifts in conscientizaçã, and how well we are meeting our own responsibilities of reciprocity and respect as educators.* People who work as teachers in today's academy know the powerful influence of assessment on our work. Increasingly, colleges and universities are seeking to measure, assess, and build rubrics for outcomes that are deemed important within higher education, including cultural competence. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Intercultural Knowledge and Competence rubric, competence is measured by a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that together reflect a student's ability to be effective and appropriate in a variety of contexts (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2010). We argue that a social justice centered curriculum can help students develop these competencies, provide important reciprocity in the form of community service, and increase student learning of sociology and ethnic studies course content.

Steps for Implementing the Pedagogical Model

There are several practical ways that teachers can begin to engage in CSL work that honors these principles. One question that may arise is how can one find a CSL partner to begin this work? For teachers wanting to work with indigenous communities, we suggest beginning with simple relationship-building. Attending or volunteering at community events that are open to the public, such as pow wows, cultural days, and community health fairs is one way to begin putting in 'face time' with the community, which is key to gaining trust and building a healthy partnership. Professor Jacob began her partnership with AIR by attending their fundraiser dinner, hosted at one of the local reservations, when she was a new professor at USD. She listened carefully to the needs that AIR staff expressed, and began crafting ideas of how they could partner in a way that benefitted AIR as well as USD.

When an actual CSL partnership emerges, professors must grapple with issues of supervising students to both facilitate learning

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as well as engaging in activities that benefit the community partner. One key to the USD-AIR partnership is that each semester begins with a two-week orientation facilitated by AIR staff and community members. During these orientation sessions, prospective service-learning college students are taught about the history, methodology, and expectations of AIR. Students are reminded that joining AIR is a deep commitment and are encouraged to think carefully about whether the current semester is the right time for them to serve as mentors, with the understanding that they are always welcome back in the future, should the current timing not be right. The two-week orientation is an example of power-sharing, as both the college faculty member and the college students acknowledge that AIR staff and community members hold the knowledge and expertise regarding what works in their program. It sets the tone for the rest of the semester, as faculty and students remember their roles are to listen, serve, and learn as a result of the partnership.

Within the CSL project, we also suggest that students be encouraged to reflect on their experiences, as Professor Jacob has done with her students. Other practical efforts could include students writing journal entries about what they expect to gain from the CSL projects before they even engage in them. They could then revisit what they wrote in the first entry at the mid-point of the term and consider what has changed, or not, for them. It is imperative to understand how students describe their CSL project experience from its initial stages to the mid-point and conclusion in order to document potential shifts in students' consciousness. Understanding the students' experiences will also help professors realize if an intervention is needed should students continue to exhibit paternalistic views in their writing, for instance. We also recommend frequent contact between the professor and the community partners, (weekly contact in Professor Jacob's experience), to ensure modes of respect are being met.

We offer a holistic model in which to practice a human rights pedagogy in the sociological classroom. Taken together, these four principles and suggested practical steps should guide all stages of the CSL partnership for both faculty and students. We propose this model fully understanding that the institution does not support, advocate, or reward this kind of pedagogy. However, we feel our

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model is important given that we are proposing that our actions as educators, both big and small, must transform the academy in order to 'indigenize' it. The transformation we ultimately seek is not just on the individual student level, but rather at an institutional level as well, which may result in faculty of color being labeled as 'problem' faculty or as 'bad citizens.' Yet, just as our predecessors from the early days of the formation of ethnic studies and women's studies, we must also consider residing in the space of discomfort too.

Conclusion

'Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom.

-bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994)

As we reflect and appreciate the struggle of educators of color before us, we understand ethnic studies and women's studies programs and departments to be at a crossroads nearly fifty years after their formations. '[A] movement against and beyond boundaries' goes to the essence of what ethnic studies and women's studies symbolized in its earliest days. As these programs and departments represented the assertion by communities of color about their human right to an education as well as their human right to representation in academia, their development lent itself to creating a space where scholars of color could began to work in partnership with some of their own social and cultural communities, accessing their own 'cultural resources' which are unfamiliar, though desperately needed, in academic institutions.

As students, faculty, and staff ventured in this uncharted and volatile terrain in the late 1960s and early 1970s, within an institutional setting that did not want them to begin with, the responsibility in developing a critical pedagogy remained a crucial human rights project for these dedicated educators. As we discussed in this article, critical pedagogy and race remained largely under-developed, though if race is centralized in the development of a critical pedagogy, the evolution of

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students' *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, will begin to emerge, especially when they interact and learn from Native peoples. Furthermore, when working with indigenous peoples in particular, an understanding of the cultural and political aspects of indigeneity is critical for comprehensively situating indigenous identity. Without this context, we risk negating the destruction of colonialism in the lives of Native peoples.

The perspectives and analyses we advance in this article about the politics of teaching come at a time when sociology is deeply divided about the roles of professors.¹² Put simply, are we public intellectuals or detached experts? We believe our responsibility as sociologists is to remain engaged with the public. In our view, being public sociologists is required for building relationships with community members that are mutually beneficial, enriching, and rewarding for students and the community. Moreover, our relationship with non-academic community members has a direct effect on CSL opportunities for students.

In this article, we argue human rights are instrumental for building community in the classroom. Human rights can serve as the foundation, or the basket strands, upon which we craft a liberatory pedagogy. Human rights are interdependent and indivisible; thus, human rights can serve as pillar on which we build our curriculum in the name of holistic justice and interwoven liberation. This required community-building can result in carrying out CSL projects productively and ethically.

We have discussed an approach to community service-learning that emphasizes the values of reciprocity and sincerity, and we have analyzed the ways in which this approach can help deconstruct race, gender, and class oppression. Nevertheless, we remain aware that a number of institutional barriers makes it difficult to practice a critical pedagogy beyond academic borders. For instance, academia does not value the difficulty and labor involved in establishing trusting relationships with community members of color, in particular, Native elders. Yet, we believe that we have a responsibility to cultivate a community across academic boundaries in the name of human rights and collective justice.

We conclude our article by offering our pedagogical model based on four principles, which merges Native ideologies and human

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rights, and practical steps for its implementation. Based on notions of reciprocity and sincerity, inter-cultural competence, a rejection of paternalism, and developing new assessment rubrics, the four principles offer a holistic model for educators interested in conceptualizing CSL projects in terms of justice and activism. We propose our model with an awareness of the limitations of time and energy of faculty of color. At the same time, we believe that we must advocate for a pedagogical model that does not reify Eurocentric values of academia such as individualism and self-interest. If we want to build an academia with the *potential* to be a 'center of decolonization,' then, as Miheuah and Wilson maintain, 'perhaps our activism and persistence within the academy might also redefine the institution.' We can then feel confident that we are contributing to a beautiful basket that holds the potential for our interwoven liberation.

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Endnotes

1. The highly controversial 2010 Arizona immigration bill includes eliminating ethnic studies programs in high school because it 'advocate(s) ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals' (see House Bill 2281 and 'Arizona bill targeting ethnic studies signed into law' in the *Los Angeles Times* on 12 May 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/12/nation/la-na-ethnic-studies-20100512>).
2. Falcón identifies as a Latina; her parents are immigrants from Perú. Jacob identifies as an indigenous woman; she is a member of the Yakama Nation in Washington State. Throughout the article, we intentionally use the language of 'we' and 'our' for solidarity purposes; thus, even though Falcón does not identify as an indigenous woman, we felt that the overlap between our immigrant and Native biographies and experiences aptly lends itself to recognizing and affirming our political, social, and cultural solidarities in our collaborative project.
3. The University of California, Santa Cruz does not have an ethnic studies department or program.
4. Source: <http://sociology.uchicago.edu/departments/> (last accessed on 30 November 2010). The University of Kansas offered the first Sociology class taught in the United States in 1890 called "Elements of Sociology." Professor Frank Wilson Blackmar taught the course (see: <http://www.sociology.ku.edu/about/>, last access on 30 November 2010).
5. At the University of California, Santa Barbara, our theoretical training included W.E.B. DuBois as part of the sociological canon (see Reed: 2006).
6. The Latin American tradition of *testimonios* is similar to Native storytelling (The Latina Feminist Group 2001).
7. The phrase 'in a good way' is one that is often used by Native elders.
8. We do not mean to convey, by any means, that all knowledge should be regarded as equal. In other words, the 'knowledge' of the white supremacist should not be given the same 'value' as that of a working-class community member.
9. While the partnership with AIR has remained consistent over the years, the title and topic of my (Jacob) course has changed. This is an effect of being part of a new Ethnic Studies department, with a growing curriculum and a small body of students from which to draw for my classes. Thus, I pair the service-learning activities with one of my upper-division classes, such as 'Gender in Native America' or 'American Indian Health and Spirituality.' Each class has a set of topical readings that stays consistent over the years, and I work in collaboration with the community partner staff to help choose.
10. Professor Jacob obtained human subjects approval to analyze these reflection papers from the USD Institutional Review Board. All students provided consent to have their papers included in the project.
11. For more information of the damages that stereotypes may bring, see Miheuah 2002.
12. The theme of the 2004 American Sociological Association (ASA) was public soci-

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ology. US sociologists debated the merits of the theme and subject following the August meeting (See “Letters to the Editor” in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* from October 1, 2004 regarding Prof. Michael Burawoy’s support of public sociologies in his public address at the 2004 ASA meeting, <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Proper-Role-of-Sociology/18485>)

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